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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9922
INFO RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 2226
RUEHGO/AMEMBASSY RANGOON PRIORITY 2983
RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI PRIORITY
RHMFISS/CDRUSARPAC FT SHAFTER HI PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/CJCS WASHDC PRIORITY
RHHMHAA/COMPACFLT PEARL HARBOR HI PRIORITY
RHHMUNS/COMSOPAC HONOLULU HI PRIORITY
RUEKDIA/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEKDIA/JOINT STAFF WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 DHAKA 000071

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR SCA/FO, SCA/INSB, S/CT, AND PM

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PINS](#) [EAID](#) [PTER](#) [PHUM](#) [MASS](#) [MCAP](#) [SNAR](#) [BG](#)

SUBJECT: PACIFIC COMMAND SUPPORT FOR BANGLADESH SHOWCASED
FOR SENATE ARMED SERVICES STAFFERS

Classified By: Ambassador James F. Moriarty. Reasons 1.4 (B) and (D)

Summary

1. (C) A January 12-13 visit to Bangladesh by Professional Staff Members from the Senate Armed Services Committee highlighted the integration of U.S. Pacific Command programs with U.S. Mission Dhaka's efforts to support development, deny space to terrorists and extremists, and enhance democracy. The StaffDel visited multipurpose cyclone shelters funded by PACOM that will protect rural populations during natural disasters and serve as schools and community centers during other times. The StaffDel also traveled to Bangladesh's Naval Special Warfare and Diving Salvage unit, through which Mission Dhaka and PACOM are supporting Bangladesh's efforts to secure better its long maritime border. Mission Dhaka also briefed the StaffDel on USG efforts to improve the human rights record of Bangladesh's main counter-terrorism force, the Rapid Action Battalion (RAB).

StaffDel Visits Cyclone Shelters

2. (SBU) Michael Noblet, Michael Kostiw, and Adam Barker, Professional Staff Members for the Senate Armed Services Committee visited the sites of two Multipurpose Cyclone Shelters (MPCSSs), part of a Civil-Military Support Element (CMSE) project near Khulna, in southwest Bangladesh. Approximately 20 community leaders and 200 schoolchildren met with the delegation as they toured the shelters. The local community utilizes the shelters visited primarily as Schools and during disasters each shelter will protect 1,200 people. The CMSE project will build 23 shelters in southern Bangladesh, which is particularly vulnerable to cyclones. The Civil-Military Support Element developed its shelter program in tandem with USAID, which is also working to strengthen Bangladesh's cyclone shelter network. Cyclone shelters are a key instrument in Bangladesh's toolkit for managing the natural disasters that regularly hit this country. In 2007, Cyclone Sidr ravished the Khulna region of Bangladesh, killing 4,000 people and displacing millions more.

StaffDel Meets with SWADS

13. (C) StaffDel Noblet also toured the training facilities of Bangladesh's Special Warfare and Diving Salvage unit (SWADS) at Chittagong Naval Base, in southeastern Banglash. The SWADS Commander and Chittagong Naval Base Commodore discussed the SWADS' progress and USG support for strengthening Bangladesh's ability to protect its large coastline, which is vulnerable to terrorist and criminal smuggling. The SWADS Commander outlined a timetable for staffing and training the unit, equipment needs, and future roles for the SWADS. SWADS officers briefed StaffDel Noblet on the 100-acre facility the Bangladesh Navy will build for the SWADS, which will include barracks, maintenance facilities, training ranges, equipment storerooms, and offices. The SWADS Commander, Commodore, and Bangladesh Naval officers who briefed the delegation highlighted the important role U.S. assistance has had in establishing the SWADS and enhancing the Bangladesh Navy's overall capabilities to improve maritime security.

Moving Forward with the RAB

14. (C) Mission Dhaka briefed StaffDel Noblet on efforts to engage the Rapid Action Battalion (RAB), Bangladesh's primary counterterrorism unit. EmbOffs focused on USG efforts to improve the RAB's human rights record and the commitment of RAB's leadership to making progress in this area. Mr. Noblet said he understood that Bangladesh's Police Act, written in 1861, did little to protect the rights of the community; he

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agreed that legal and judicial reform was an important element in addressing human rights issues within the RAB and other Bangladesh law enforcement agencies. The Mission briefed the StaffDel on the high-level, inter-agency effort in Washington and Dhaka to shape USG policy towards the RAB and implement activities to bring about meaningful change within the RAB.

Comment

15. (C) Mission Dhaka highlighted for StaffDel Noblet the vital contributions made by Pacific Command, particularly the PACOM Augmentation Team (PAT), to the key USG objectives in Bangladesh: enhancing democracy, promoting development, and denying space to terrorists and extremists. Programs like the cyclone shelters improve Bangladesh's ability to respond to disasters, which will likely increase as Bangladesh copes with global climate change. The Special Warfare and Diving Unit will deter terrorists and criminals from using Bangladesh as a platform to target interests in South Asia and beyond. Mission Dhaka also showcased the tight integration of PACOM programs into Mission activities more broadly. PACOM's resources, agility and flexibility have greatly enhanced the USG's ability to advance its goals in Bangladesh, particularly during times of crisis.
MORIARTY